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A Message
To the Makers of Public Sentiment
in Connecticut

WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR

Speeches of

THE PRESIDENT ON FLAG DAY

of

ELIHU ROOT TO RUSSIA

and

MESSAGE TO THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

from the

AMERICAN RIGHTS LEAGUE

U.S. Theodore, 1910- (Wilson)

ISSUED BY
THE CONNECTICUT STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE
HARTFORD, CONN.

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AUG 16 1917

To the Recipient of this Bulletin:

These three addresses are sent to you, because your position in your community is such that you are a Maker of Public Sentiment.

These addresses contain the key to the present critical posture of affairs. They are the official voice of the nation's leaders.

Will you not accept the responsibility of giving currency to these views by every means in your power?

CONNECTICUT STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE,

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"THE INTRIGUE FOR PEACE"

Address by President Woodrow Wilson at Washington on Flag Day, June 14, 1917.

My Fellow Citizens: — We meet to celebrate Flag Day because this flag which we honor and under which we serve is the emblem of our unity, our power, our thought and purpose as a nation. It has no other character than that which we give it from generation to generation. The choices are ours. It floats in majestic silence above the hosts that execute those choices, whether in peace or in war. And yet, though silent, it speaks to us,— speaks to us of the past, of the men and women who went before us and of the records they wrote upon it. We celebrate the day of its birth; and from its birth until now it has witnessed a great history, has floated on high the symbol of great events, of a great plan of life worked out by great people. We are about to carry it into battle, to lift it where it will draw the fire of our enemies. We are about to bid thousands, hundreds of thousands, it may be millions, of our men, the young, the strong, the capable men of the nation, to go forth and die beneath it on fields of blood far away, — for what? For some unaccustomed thing? For something for which it has never sought the fire before? American armies were never before sent across the seas. Why are they sent now? For some new purpose, for which this great flag has never been carried before or for some old, familiar, heroic purpose for which it has seen men, its own men die upon every battlefield upon which Americans have borne arms since the Revolution?

These are questions which must be answered. We are Americans. We in our turn serve America, and can serve her with no private purpose. We must use her flag as she has always used it. We are accountable at the bar of history and must plead in utter frankness what purpose it is we seek to serve.

America Forced into War.

It is plain enough how we were forced into the war. The extraordinary insults and aggressions of the imperial German government left us no self-respecting choice but to take up arms in defense of our rights as a free people and of our honor as a sovereign government. **The military masters of Germany denied us the right to be neutral.** They filled our unsuspecting communities with vicious spies and conspirators and sought to corrupt the opinion of our people in their own behalf. When they found that they could not do that, their agents diligently spread sedition amongst us and sought to draw our own citizens from their allegiance — and some of these agents were men connected with the official embassy of the German government itself here in our own capital. They sought by violence to destroy our

industries and arrest our commerce. They tried to incite Mexico to take up arms against us and to draw Japan into a hostile alliance with her,—and that, not by indirection, but by direct suggestion from the foreign office in Berlin. They impudently denied us the use of the high seas and repeatedly executed their threats that they would send to their death any of our people who ventured to approach the coasts of Europe. And many of our own people were corrupted. Men began to look upon their own neighbors with suspicion and to wonder in their hot resentment and surprise whether there was any community in which hostile intrigue did not lurk. What great nation in such circumstances would not have taken up arms? Much as we had desired peace, it was denied us, and not of our own choice. **This flag under which we serve would have been dishonored had we withheld our hand.**

Fighting Germans for Their Good.

But that is only part of the story. We know now as clearly as we knew before we were ourselves engaged that we are not the enemies of the German people and that they are not our enemies. They did not originate or desire this hideous war or wish that we should be drawn into it; and we are vaguely conscious that we are fighting their cause, as they will some day see it, as well as our own. They are themselves in the grip of the same sinister power that has now at last stretched its ugly talons out and drawn blood from us. **The whole world is at war because the whole world is in the grip of that power and is trying out the great battle which shall determine whether it is to be brought under its mastery or fling itself free.**

The war was begun by the military masters of Germany, who proved to be also the masters of Austria-Hungary. These men have never regarded nations as peoples, men, women, and children of like blood and frame as themselves, for whom governments existed and in whom governments had their life. They have regarded them merely as serviceable organizations which they could by force or intrigue bend or corrupt to their own purpose. They have regarded the smaller states, in particular, and the peoples who could be overwhelmed by force, as their natural tools and instruments of domination.

Purpose Long Avowed.

Their purpose has long been avowed. The statesmen of other nations, to whom that purpose was incredible, paid little attention; regarded what German professors expounded in their classrooms and German writers set forth to the world as the goal of German policy as rather the dream of minds detached from practical affairs, as preposterous private conceptions of German destiny, than as the actual plans of responsible rulers; but the rulers of Germany themselves knew all the while what concrete plans, what well advanced intrigues lay back of what the professors and the writers were saying, and were glad to go forward unmolested, filling the thrones of Balkan states with German princes, putting German officers at the service of Turkey to drill her armies and make interest with her government, developing plans of sedition and rebellion in India and Egypt, setting their fires in Persia. **The demands made by Austria upon Servia were a mere single step in a plan which compassed Europe and Asia, from Berlin to Bagdad.** They hoped those demands might not arouse Europe, but they meant to press them whether they did or not, for they thought themselves ready for the final issue of arms.

Their plan was to throw a broad belt of German military power and political control across the very center of Europe, and beyond the Mediterranean into the heart of Asia; and Austria-Hungary was to be as much their tool and pawn as Servia or Bulgaria or Turkey or the ponderous states of the East. Austria-Hungary, indeed, was to become part of the Central German Empire, absorbed and dominated by the same forces and influences that has originally cemented the German states themselves. The dream had its heart at Berlin. It could have had a heart nowhere else! It rejected the idea of solidarity of race entirely. The choice of peoples played no part in it at all. It contemplated binding together racial and political units which could be kept together only by force, — Czechs, Magyars, Croats, Serbs, Roumanians, Turks, Armenians, — the proud state of Bohemia and Hungary, the stout little commonwealths of the Balkans, the indomitable Turks, the subtle peoples of the East. These peoples did not wish to be united. They ardently desired to direct their own affairs, would be satisfied only by undisputed independence. They could be kept quiet only by the presence or the constant threat of armed men. They would live under a common power only by sheer compulsion and await the day of revolution. But the German military statesmen had reckoned with all that, and were ready to deal with it in their own way.

Amazing Plan in Execution.

And they have actually carried the greater part of that amazing plan into execution. Look how things stand. Austria is at their mercy. It has acted, not upon its own initiative or upon the choice of its own people, but at Berlin's dictation ever since the war began. Its people now desire peace, but cannot have it until leave is granted from Berlin. The so-called central powers are in fact but a single power. Servia is at its mercy, should its hands be but for a moment freed. Bulgaria has consented to its will, and Roumania is overrun. The Turkish armies, which Germans trained, are serving Germany, certainly not themselves, and the guns of German warships, lying in the harbor at Constantinople remind Turkish statesmen every day that they have no choice but to take their orders from Berlin. From Hamburg to the Persian Gulf the net is spread.

German Eagerness for Peace.

Is it not easy to understand the eagerness for peace that has been manifested from Berlin ever since the snare was set and sprung? Peace, peace, peace has been the talk of her foreign office for now a year and more; not peace upon her own initiative, but upon the initiative of the nations over which she now deems herself to hold the advantage. A little of the talk has been public, but most of it has been private. Through all sorts of channels it has come to me, and in all sorts of guises, but never with the terms disclosed which the German government would be willing to accept. That government has other valuable pawns in its hands besides those I have mentioned.

It still holds a valuable part of France, though with slowly relaxing grasp, and practically the whole of Belgium. Its armies press close upon Russia and overrun Poland at their will. It cannot go further; it dare not go back. It wishes to close its bargain before it is too late and it has little left to offer for the pound of flesh it will demand.

Thinking of Power at Home.

The military masters under whom Germany is bleeding see very clearly to what point Fate has brought them. If they fall back or are forced back an inch, their power both abroad and at home will fall to pieces like a house of cards. It is their power at home they are thinking about now more than their power abroad. It is that power which is trembling under their very feet; and deep fear has entered their hearts. They have but one chance to perpetuate their military power or even their controlling political influence. **If they can secure peace now with the immense advantages still in their hands which they have up to this point apparently gained, they will have justified themselves before the German people;** they will have gained by force what they promised to gain by it; an immense expansion of German power, an immense enlargement of German industrial and commercial opportunities. Their prestige will be secure, and with their prestige their political power. **If they fail, their people will thrust them aside; a government accountable to the people themselves will be set up in Germany** as it has been in England, in the United States, in France, and in all the great countries of the modern time except Germany. **If they succeed they are safe and Germany and the world are undone; if they fail Germany is saved and the world will be at peace. If they succeed, America will fall within the menace.** We and all the rest of the world must remain armed, as they will remain and must make ready for the next step in their aggression; if they fail the world may unite for peace and Germany may be of the union.

Sinister Intrigue for Peace.

Do you not now understand the new intrigue, the intrigue for peace, and why the masters of Germany do not hesitate to use any agency that promises to effect their purpose, the deceit of the nations? **Their present particular aim is to deceive all those who throughout the world stand for the rights of peoples and the self-government of nations;** for they see what immense strength the forces of justice and of liberalism are gathering out of this war. They are employing liberals in their enterprise. They are using men, in Germany and without, as their spokesmen whom they have hitherto despised and oppressed, using them for their own destruction, — socialists, the leaders of labor, the thinkers they have hitherto sought to silence. Let them once succeed and these men, now their tools, will be ground to powder beneath the weight of the great military empire they will have set up; the revolutionists in Russia will be cut off from all succor or co-operation in western Europe and a counter revolution fostered and supported; Germany herself will lose her chance of freedom; and all Europe will arm for the next, the final struggle.

The sinister intrigue is being no less actively conducted in this country than in Russia and in every country in Europe to which the agents and dupes of the imperial German government can get access. That government has many spokesmen here, in places high and low. They have learned discretion. They keep within the law. It is opinion they utter now, not sedition. They proclaim the liberal purposes of their masters; declare this a foreign war which can touch America with no danger to either her lands or her institutions; set England at the center of the stage and talk of her ambition to assert economic dominion throughout the

world; appeal to our ancient tradition of isolation in the politics of the nations; and seek to undermine the government with false professions of loyalty to its principles.

People's War.

But they will make no headway. The false betray themselves always in every accent. It is only friends and partisans of the German government whom we have already identified who utter these thinly disguised disloyalties. The facts are patent to all the world, and nowhere are they more plainly seen than in the United States, where we are accustomed to deal with facts and not with sophistries; and the great fact that stands out above all the rest is that this is a people's war, a war for freedom and justice and self-government amongst all the nations of the world, a war to make the world safe for the people who live upon it and have made it their own, the German people themselves included; and that with us rests the choice to break through all these hypocrisies and patent cheats and masks of brute force and help set the world free, or else stand aside and let it be dominated a long age through by sheer weight of arms and the arbitrary choices of self-constituted masters by the nation which can maintain the biggest armies and the most irresistible armaments, — a power to which the world has afforded no parallel and in the face of which political freedom must wither and perish.

Flag Shall Wear New Luster.

"For us there is but one choice. We have made it. Woe be to the man or group of men that seeks to stand in our way in this day of high resolution when every principle we hold dearest is to be vindicated and made secure for the salvation of the nations. We are ready to plead at the bar of history, and our flag shall wear a new luster. Once more we shall make good with our lives and fortunes the great faith to which we were born, and a new glory shall shine in the face of our people."

AMERICA TO RUSSIA

Address by Elihu Root, at Petrograd on June 15, 1917.

Mr. President and Members of the Council of Ministers:

The mission for which I have the honor to speak is charged by the government and people of the United States of America with a message to the government and people of Russia. The mission comes from a democratic republic.

Its members are commissioned and instructed by a President who holds his high office as chief executive of more than 100,000,000 free people by virtue of popular election, in which more than 18,000,000 votes were freely cast and fairly counted pursuant to law, by universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage.

For one hundred and forty years our people have been struggling with the hard problems of self-government. With many shortcomings, many mistakes, many imperfections, we still have maintained order and respect for law, individual freedom, and national independence.

Under the security of our own laws we have grown in strength and prosperity. But **we value our freedom more than wealth.** We love liberty and **we cherish above all our possessions the ideals for which our fathers fought and suffered and sacrificed** that America might be free.

We believe in the competence of the power of democracy and in our heart of hearts abides faith in the coming of a better world in which the humble and oppressed of all lands may be lifted up by freedom to a heritage of justice and equal opportunity.

Joy at Russia's Freedom.

The news of Russia's new-found freedom brought to America universal satisfaction and joy. From all the land sympathy and hope went out to the new sister in the circle of democracies. And the mission is sent to express that feeling.

The American democracy send to the democracy of Russia a greeting of sympathy, friendship, brotherhood, godspeed.

Distant America knows little of the special conditions of Russian life which must give form to the government and laws which you are about to create. As we have developed our institutions to serve the needs of our national character and life, so, we assume that you will develop your institutions to serve the needs of Russian character and life.

As we look across the sea we distinguish no party, no class. We see great Russia as a whole, as one mighty, striving, aspiring democracy.

Common Danger to All.

One fearful danger threatens the liberty of both nations. The armed forces of a military autocracy are at the gates of Russia and the allies. The triumph of German arms will mean the death of liberty in Russia. No enemy is at the gates of America, but **America has come to realize that the triumph of German arms means the death of liberty in the world; that we who love liberty and would keep it must fight for it,** and fight for it now when the free democracies of the world may be srong in union, and not delay until they may be beaten down separately in succession.

So, America sends another message to Russia — that **we are going to fight, and have already begun to fight,** for your freedom equally with our own, and we ask you to fight for our freedom equally with yours. We would make your cause ours and our cause yours, and, with a common purpose and mutual helpfulness of a firm alliance, make sure of victory over our common foe.

Quotes Word of Wilson.

You will recognize your own sentiments and purposes in the words of President Wilson to the American congress when, on the 2d of April last, he advised a declaration of war against Germany. He said then:

"We are accepting this challenge of hostile purpose because we know that in such a government [the German government], following such methods, we can never have a friend, and that in the presence of its organized power, always lying in wait to accomplish we know not what purpose, there can be no assured security for the democratic governments of the world.

"We are now about to accept the gage of battle with this natural foe to liberty, and shall, if necessary, spend the whole force of the nation to check and nullify its pretensions and its power.

Seek Peace and Freedom.

"We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretense about them to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included; for the rights of nations, great and small, and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience.

"The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them."

Wilson Praise to Russia.

And you will see the feeling toward Russia with which America has entered the great war in another clause of the same address. President Wilson further declared:

"Does not every American feel that assurance has been added to our hope for the future peace of the world by the

wonderful and heartening things that have been happening within the last few weeks in Russia? Russia was known by those who knew her best to have been always in fact democratic at heart, in all the vital habits of her thought, in all the intimate relationships of her people that spoke their natural instinct, their habitual attitude toward life.

"The autocracy that crowned the summit of her political structure, long as it had stood and terrible as was the reality of its power, was not, in fact, Russian in origin, character, or purpose, and now it has been shaken off and the great generous Russian people have been added, in all their naïve majesty and might, to the forces that are fighting for freedom in the world, for justice, and for peace. Here is a fit partner for a league of honor."

"That partnership of honor in the great struggle for human freedom, the oldest of the great democracies now seeks in fraternal union with the youngest. Practical and specific methods and the possibilities of our allies' co-operation, the members of the mission would be glad to discuss with the members of the government of Russia."

MESSAGE TO RUSSIAN PEOPLE

By the American Rights League, Sent June 23, 1917

The following Message to the Russian People from the American Rights League and signed in its behalf by Lyman Abbott, James M. Beck, Frederic R. Coudert, Thomas A. Edison, Charles B. Fairchild, Franklin H. Giddings, John Grier Hibben, Hamilton Holt, Charles Evans Hughes, George Kennan, Louis Marshall, Theodore Roosevelt, William Roscoe Thayer, William English Walling, George W. Wickersham, George Haven Putnam, president of the American Rights League; Douglas Wilson Johnson, chairman of the Executive Committee, and William Emerson, secretary and treasurer, was sent June 23, 1917. The text of the message follows:

"To the Great Russian People:

"Citizens of the oldest and greatest democracy of the New World, we greet our brother citizens of the newest and greatest democracy of the Old World. Defenders of the principles of democracy in our wars of 1776, 1812, 1861 and 1898, we are proud to become your allies in the final struggle to make the world safe for democracy.

"Three years ago you took up arms to defend your brothers of the south against brutal Teutonic aggression. Believing in the justice of your sacred cause, your gallant ally France took her place by your side with drawn sword. Great Britain followed, and today we have consecrated our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor to the same cause of human liberty in which you so nobly assumed the leadership.

"With you, as with us, there has been one national ideal of honor and justice but a multiplicity of individual counsels. The freedom of speech and action which is essential to true democracy affords unlimited opportunity for the enemy without and the traitor within to raise their voices in efforts to mould public opinion and national policy to the detriment of the whole people. While your gallant soldiers were carrying the banners of liberty to the crest of the Carpathians, we were fighting an insidious German propaganda in our midst which sought to paralyze any national action in behalf of your righteous cause. **America, like Russia, was flooded with German agents, who secretly employed as their tools honest and well meaning citizens in an effort to commit us to a German-made peace.**

German Peace Propaganda.

"Impressed by their own unfortunate experience, the American people have viewed with deep anxiety a propaganda pushed by

German agents, based on the appeal of certain Russian parties for a 'peace without annexation or indemnities.' Our anxiety is not based on any desire for conquest of enemy territory, nor on any determination to weaken and humiliate our opponents by punitive indemnities. **No democracy engages in a war of conquest and plunder.** But we recognize that the ambiguous slogan 'peace without annexation or indemnities' is being exploited by the same subtle German peace propaganda from which for more than two years we have so grievously suffered.

"**Germany plans a great central European autocracy which shall cut the continent in two, stifle the growth of Russia by forever closing her only southern outlet to the seas, subjugate western Asia to the gates of India, and pave the way for a later war with world domination as the goal.** To this end she has dominated Austrian policy in the Balkans, reduced Bulgaria and Turkey to vassalage, appeared 'in shining armor' to protect Austria in the seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and secretly supported the conquest of Serbia.

"Today, facing inevitable collapse if her enemies maintain their alliance against her, Germany believes she can still wrest victory from defeat providing she is able to detach Russia from her faithful allies by offers of peace without annexation or indemnities. Failing this, she hopes through Russia to impose on the Allies a policy which would leave Germany in secure control of Bosnia, Herzegovina and other lands previously taken by force from her peaceful neighbors. With these earlier conquests guaranteed to her by treaty, with her dominion over Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey consolidated and extended, **a new and more powerful Germany would emerge from the ruins of the war she wilfully provoked.** Profiting by her conquests of supplies, machinery and treasures from invaded territories, sustained by the billions of illegal indemnities levied on captured cities, strong in her own practical freedom from the ravages of hostile armies, immeasurably strengthened in the eyes of the world by the military prestige and the moral victory which belong to those who conclude terms of peace on enemy territory, her foes weakened for a century to come through the systematic destruction effected by her invading armies, **the new Germany would enter upon plans for future aggrandizement with every prospect of ultimate success.** Little wonder that this kind of a 'peace without annexation or indemnities' sounds sweet to German ears.

Question of Annexation.

"Such is the peace which German agents in every land are secretly supporting. Such is the peace which would forge anew on Russia the chains just broken by your glorious revolution. Such is the peace we are united in the fraternity of democracy to prevent.

"To those in both our lands who speak of peace without annexation or indemnities, let us frankly say: 'If you mean by this a peace which shall not permit seizure of the homes and fields of our enemies, we are at one with you. If you oppose the forcible conquest of alien lands and the violent enslavement of alien peoples, our opposition is no less strong than yours. If you desire no wrongful indemnities imposed for the express purpose of impoverishing the countries which provoked this war, then our desires are equally the same. If this be what you mean by peace without annexation or indemnities, then would we welcome such a peace.'

"But if by no annexation you mean that the Teutonic robbers should not hand back the sacred soil of Russia and Serbia, forcibly torn from Slavic hands today, or that they should not restore the territory of Russia's brother Slavs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, wrested from them with equal ruthlessness but yesterday; if you mean that they need not surrender the blood soaked fields of innocent Belgium and the devastated lands of Northern France, conquered by autocratic militarism today, nor restore to its rightful allegiance the fair province of Alsace-Lorraine, enslaved by that same militarism but yesterday; if you mean that stricken Armenia, rescued by Russian armies from Turkish tyranny, should be abandoned to renewed massacre and pillage at the hands of the Turks and Kurds; if by no indemnities you mean that just reparation for actual damage done in the invaded territories shall not be made by those who wrought the awful havoc, that heroic Belgium shall be abandoned to helpless contemplation of her ruined country with no hope of rehabilitation, that the gallant France, who hurried to Russia's side in the unequal battle, must out of her poverty repay the millions stolen from her people for the enrichment of Germany or wantonly destroyed for the purpose of weakening the future development of France; if you mean that upon the innocent victim shall fall the burden of restoring ravished lands, while the guilty aggressor is left to the profitable enjoyment of the fruits of his robberies, then do we say to you, **'The people of free democracies know how to die, but they do not know how to make an unjust, dishonorable peace.'**

Victory Is In Sight.

"Your magnificent armies have demonstrated that when properly supplied with munitions of war they are superior to the forces of autocratic militarism. They will yet drive the invader from your soil and write glorious deeds on the pages of Russian history. Soon we will join you — a million, two million or more as the need may be. **We fight with you to make the world safe for democracy. The victory is in sight. Let us not stain the fair record of democracy's great achievement by sacrificing the just claims of those dependent upon us. Our common goal is the triumph of justice, the freedom of mankind and full liberty of life to the smallest nation.** The voice of your brothers in the south, the voice of our brothers in Belgium and France, remind us that there is no justice without due reparation for the wrongs they have suffered; that there is no freedom of mankind if they remain enslaved; that **there is no liberty of life until the Prussian autocracy which oppresses them has been destroyed. Let us show the world that democracy is both honorable and powerful; that it will shed no man's blood in a war of aggression, but that it will spend its own blood in a war in defence of those who are wronged and oppressed."**

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